

Making My Way

by Dragoness

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Summary: Sequel to Everything Changes Ash comes back, still hoping to get things back to normal and finally becoming the world's greatest PokÃ©mon Master...

1. Return

> <meta name="ProgId"> Chapter 1

Chapter 1

"Return"

Teleportâ€| I was starting to hate Teleportâ€| I tried to shake off the light-headedness that came with using that move, then I looked around to see where we had all ended up.

Not Dr. Gray's placeâ€| I groaned.

Well, usually, Teleport brings you to the last place that you used Teleport at, unless you choose a specific location, Taper noted.

Who asked you!? I said.

It shrugged. You need to calm down, Ash.

I ignored it.

â€| Do you think anyone's home? I asked.

"Perrsiannâ€| "

_ 'There's one way to find outâ€| '_

— —

Yeahâ€| I nodded.

I floated up to the doorbell and rang it. As soon as I did, I realized it was pointless.

"There's no one inside!" I thought out loud.

"Pikapi?"

_ 'How can you tell?' _

— —

I can't feel anyone inside!"

I tested the doorknob. It gave way easily. I pushed open the door and let myself in. The other PokÃ©mon followed.

"There hasn't been anyone here for a while!" Taper said quietly.

"Persian!"

_ 'I can smell the human scent though!' _

— —

Persian turned to me.

"Persiiann?"

_ 'Can you smell it?' _

— —

Uh!"

I landed on the floor and tried to smell humans!" Instead, I realized that I could feel what had happened before!" Misty, Brock, Richie, and Billie had left a while ago, but Dr. Gray had lingered behind!" up until a day or so ago!" then!"

"â€|â€|â€|â€|â€|Persian!"

_ 'â€|â€|â€|â€|â€|Team Rocket.' _

— —

"Mew!?"

_ 'What!?' _

— —

"Persiannnâ€|Perrrsiannâ€|"

_ 'I'd recognize that scent anywhere!" Team Rocket has been here!" _

— —

"Mmmew? Mewâ€|.mew mew?"

_ 'Are you sure it wasn't Dr. Gray? Or maybe it was Billie? They're both Rockets, you knowâ€| '_

--

"Persian! Perrrrrâ€| "

_ 'You mean _former_ Rocketsâ€|No, these ones still smelled freshâ€| '_

--

"â€|Mewâ€| "

_ 'â€|What do you think happened? '_

--

Persian sniffed around some more.

"Perssiiianâ€|â€|Perrrâ€|perrâ€| "

_ 'It's hard to tell, butâ€|â€|I don't think he left willinglyâ€| '_

--

You think something bad happened to him? I asked.

"Perrâ€| "

_ 'Most likelyâ€| '_

--

"Pikachu! "

_ 'We have to help him! '_

--

I looked back at Pikachu. I understood where it was coming fromâ€|but I wasn't sure if it was worth risking our necks to save Dr. Grayâ€|â€|He had been the one to createâ€|thatâ€|â€|â€|after allâ€|â€|.

"Saurâ€|â€|Bulba? "

_ 'Umâ€|â€|Who is he? '_

--

"Mew? "

_ 'Dr. Gray? '_

--

"Bulbasaur."

_ 'Yeah.' _

— —

Well, umâ€|â€|

He's the guy who used to work hereâ€|He's a scientist, Taper explained.

"Bulbaâ€| ?"

_ 'Uhâ€|Okayâ€| ' _

— —

"Charizardâ€|" Charizard puffed.

_ 'I say we leave himâ€| ' _

— —

"Pidge! Geotto!"

_ 'We can't do that! Right, Ash?' _

— —

Uhâ€|

"Pika!"

_ 'Right!' _

— —

I didn't like where things were going. I didn't want to pay a visit toâ€|Giovanniâ€|â€|I just wanted to go homeâ€|â€|

"Persiannâ€| "

_ 'It's decided thenâ€|Let's go.' _

— —

I sighed.

"Mewâ€|â€| "

_ 'Let's get goingâ€|â€| ' _

— —

* * *

The eleven of us (Me, Pikachu, Persian, Taper, Bulbasaur, Charizard, Squirtle, Kingler, Muk, Sandslash, and Magnemite) tried to head to Viridian somewhat inconspicuouslyâ€|Once we reached the edge of town,

I knew we couldn't make it much farther as a group.

Okay, you guys. We can't all just storm in there togetherâ€| Some of you have to stay hereâ€|

"Izard!" Charizard said immediately.

_ 'I'll stay! '_

— —

I should've guessed, I said wryly.

"Pikachu!"

_ 'I'm coming! '_

— —

Okayâ€| I nodded, That's one staying and one goingâ€|

"Perrsiannnâ€| "

_ 'Make that two goingâ€| '_

— —

Okay. Two going, I corrected myself.

Aren't you going, Ash? Taper asked.

Okay! Three going! I said.

â€|â€|I will go, Taper said.

Make that fourâ€|

"Pikachu?"

_ 'Is that enough? '_

— —

Ummâ€|

"Bulbasaur!"

_ 'I'll keep everyone else in line! '_

— —

"Squirtle, squirt!"

_ 'Me too! '_

— —

Okay, that's good, I told them, Bulbasaur's gonna need your help to keep Charizard on good behaviorâ€|

"Char! ? Zard!" Charizard huffed angrily.

Okay, let's go, I said to Pikachu, Taper, and Persian.

"Izarddd!" Charizard said, just as we were about to leave.

_ 'Wait, Ash! '_

— —

Huh?

"Charrrr! Charizard! "

_ 'I have a score to settle with Giovanni! '_

— —

Oh! Okay! um, let's go then!

"Pidgeotto!" Pidgeotto called.

_ 'Goodbye, Ash! '_

— —

"Bulbasaur! "

_ 'Good luck! '_

— —

"Squirtle squirtle!"

_ 'You're gonna need it! '_

— —

You just wait and see!

It didn't take too long to get to the Team Rocket headquarters. I didn't know of any side entrances, so we all just went in the front door. I didn't bother to change into myself, because it would probably be better if no one recognized me except for perhaps Giovanni and Dr. Gray! Of course, being a rare PokÃ©mon inside of a group of PokÃ©mon thieves' hideout would have its disadvantages, but at least I'd be able to defend myself.

"Hey! Look at all of those PokÃ©mon!" James announced.

I looked up and saw none other than Jessie, James and Meowth, all staring at us.

"Zzarrrrd!" Charizard growled.

_ 'I don't like those guys! '_

Neither do I, but we're gonna have to put up with them okay? I said to only them.

"Persian?"

_ 'What do you mean? '_

— —

You'll seeâ€|

"Hey! I recognize all of dose PokÃ©mon!" Meowth said suddenly.

"Heyâ€| So do I!" Jessie said.

"Yeah! That's that Charizard that used to belong to the boss after we stole it from that kid, and that Pikachu is definitely the twerp's."

"Dat's da boss's Persianâ€| and the Drowzee belongs to da twerpâ€| " Meowth hissed.

"â€| What about that other thing?" Jessie asked.

_ Thing?_

— —

"Uhâ€| Hey! It's dat little white cat thingy that saved us from dat other bigâ€| meanâ€| â€| â€| "

I noticed that my comrades were staring at meâ€| not to mention everyone else in the roomâ€| I cleared my throat.

"Mew, mew mew?" I asked.

_ 'Excuse me, but do you know where Dr. Gray is? '_

— —

"Pika!?"

_ 'What are you doing!?'_

— —

Just trust me!

"Pikachuâ€|â€| " Pikachu said worriedly.

_ 'I don't know if that's a good ideaâ€|â€| '_

— —

I didn't know if Pikachu was talking about asking about Dr. Gray or trusting me, and I decided it was best not to find out.

"Dr. Gray?" Meowth asked, "Ya mean dat looney they brought in here a while agoâ€|?"

"Mewâ€| Mew, mewâ€| " I said nervously.

_ 'Uhâ€|Yes, that's probably himâ€|'_

— —

"We're not allowed to tell anyone dat information," Meowth declared, crossing its arms.

"Persian! Perrrâ€| "

_ 'Tell us, Meowth! Or elseâ€|'_

— —

"Is dat a threat?" Meowth asked snidely, "I'm sure you realize that I've got a much better threat dan you guys could ever come up with."

"Mew mew!?"

_ 'And what's that!?'_

— —

"I'll tell da boss dat you guys are here. I'm sure you'd all enjoy datâ€|"

"Um, Meowthâ€|Aren't we supposed to tell him anyway?" Jessie asked.

"Shhh!" Meowth shushed her.

"Mewâ€|mewmewâ€|Mew."

_ 'Thanks, but no thanksâ€|We've gotta get going.'_

— —

"You ain't goin' anywhere!" Meowth screeched, "I'm tellin' da boss right now!"

"Yes sir!" James said. He then ran off down the hallwayâ€|towards the boss's office.

â€|We're in troubleâ€| I commented.

No kidding, Taper agreed.

"Persian?" Persian asked, "Perrrsiannâ€|Persian."

_ 'Trouble? Have you forgotten who I am? I know a way.'_

— —

"Mew?"

_ 'You do?'_

— —

"Perrrsiannâ€| Persiann."

_ 'This is my old hunting groundâ€| I'll track down that mouse.' _

— —

"Pika?!"

_ 'What?!" _

— —

"Persian."

_ 'No offense.' _

— —

"Pikachuâ€|" Pikachu said grudgingly.

_ 'I sure hope notâ€|! !' _

— —

"You're not getting anywhere!!" Meowth interrupted.

"Charizard!?" Charizard growled, stepping forward.

_ 'Is that a threat!?' _

— —

Meowth slowly stared up at the giant fire lizard. Charizard could've stepped on it accidentally and won a battle.

"Uhhhhâ€|" Meowth quavered, "Dat'sâ€|aâ€|"

"Arbok! Go!"

"Arrrrbok!" Arbok cried as it was released from it's PokÃ©ball.

Does she think Arbok can beat Charizard? I asked in amazement.

Noâ€| Taper replied.

"Lickitung, you too!"

Ha! This'll be too easy! Charizard! Flamethrower! I called.

Charizard glanced back at me.

"Charizarrddâ€|?" it asked.

_ 'Do you still think you're my trainerâ€|? ' _

— —

Huhâ€|?

"Arbok! Bite attack!" Jessie ordered.

While Arbok and Lickitung were getting ready to attack, Meowth backed off to a safe spot.

Charizard whirled around and Slashed at Arbok before it could get too close, then grabbed it, spun around, and threw it into Lickitung. The two of them slammed into the far wall and landed heavily on top of Meowth.

"Owwâ€|" it groaned.

"Thatâ€|was a quick roundâ€|" Jessie noted.

"Charizard!" a voice called from down the hall.

Oh noâ€|Not himâ€|â€|

— —

I backed up slowly, then hid behind Pikachuâ€|

"Pik?"

_ 'Ash? ' _

— —

Shhâ€|

â€|Now you're just being sillyâ€| Taper chuckled.

I glared at it, and it smiled.

It was Giovanni who had spoken to Charizard, and he entered the lobby casually, followed by a happily cowering James.

"I see you've returnedâ€|" Giovanni said with a nod, "That meansâ€|your master must not be too far behind youâ€|"

"Zard?!" Charizard snorted.

_ 'Master?!' _

— —

_What does _that_ meanâ€|?_

— —

Giovanni scanned the room. In a few seconds, his gaze fell on me.

"Ashuraâ€|" he whispered.

I noticed that Jessie, James and Meowth were staring at him as if he had gone nuts.

"Pikachuâ€|" Pikachu said in annoyance.

_ 'Stop hiding behind me.' _

--
I resigned to stop hidingâ€|

Giovanni straightened up and smiledâ€|an unusual occurrenceâ€|

"I knew you would come back, Ashâ€|Changed your mind?"

The three Rockets looked from him to me and back again. Now they _really_ thought he was out of his mind.

"Uhâ€|Excuse meâ€|sirâ€|â€|" Jessie laughed nervously, "but did you just call thatâ€|ehâ€|PokÃ©mon thereâ€|â€|Ash??"

There was no point in hiding it anymoreâ€|â€|

That's right. He did, I told them.

Their faces turned pure white. They clung to each other as if there was a ghost in the roomâ€|Hehâ€|Maybe there wasâ€|â€|

This could get interestingâ€| I realized.

My name is Ashuraâ€|but you know me better as Ashâ€| I said, trying to use a mystical tone of voice.

"How comeâ€|I can hear the twerpâ€|â€|but I can't see it?" Jessie asked.

"Andâ€|how come I'm hearing him in my head?" James added.

"You nitwits! He's standing right there!" Giovanni said, pointing at me.

I decided to have some fun with thisâ€|I floated up about half a foot and looked at them questioningly.

"Mew?"

_ 'Who, me?' _

--

"Eek!" James cried, holding Jessie tightly.

"Thatâ€|That thing's not Ashâ€|" Jessie stammered, "Ashâ€|â€|isn't that thing!"

Wow. Any other brilliant statements, Jess?

"Oooh!" she cried, hugging James as tight as she could.

"You idiots! Can't you see he's pulling a prank on you?" Giovanni asked.

"No!" they all replied vigorously.

Giovanni groaned in disgust.

"Nevermind thenâ€|â€|Ash! Have you decided to rejoin us?"

Do you really need to ask? I retorted.

"Iâ€|didn't think soâ€|" he admitted, "Very well. You leave me no choice."

He held out another little control thingy and pushed one of the buttons. I heard a metallic scraping sound, and suddenly there was a loud crash behind me. I whirled around to see that one of those metal drop-down doors was covering the exit. I grinned and turned back to Giovanni.

You think a little wall can stop us!? I asked.

"You didn't come here so you could leave," Giovanni pointed out.

Uhâ€|â€|Okay, you've got a point thereâ€|â€|

"Perrrsiannâ€|" Persian said.

_ 'Might as well spit it outâ€|' _

— —

â€|Where's Dr. Gray? I asked.

"Drâ€|.Gray?" Giovanni asked curiously, "Why do you careâ€|?"

He's not at his house-

"Of course he's not. That's not even his house you know. I had him brought back here so we could squeeze some information out of himâ€|He was somewhat helpfulâ€|However, as of right now, there is no real use for himâ€|"

So where is he? I asked impatiently.

"Oh, he'sâ€|â€|aroundâ€|"

Persian growled.

"Oh yes. I nearly forgotâ€|Persian here knows where he is, don't you?"

"Siannnâ€|"

_ 'Of courseâ€|' _

— —

Where is he, Persian? I asked.

"Siiannâ€|Perrâ€|"

_ 'The same place he puts all prisonersâ€|â€|' _

— —

Prisoners!?

I tried to picture a prison run by Team Rocketâ€|â€|It was hard at firstâ€|then I remembered how had I first met this guyâ€|â€|â€|â€|

Whereâ€|do you guys keep prisonersâ€|? I asked.

"â€|Prisoners?" Giovanni asked. He started chuckling. "I guess you could call them thatâ€|â€|We don't usually have too manyâ€|â€|â€|Would you like to join themâ€|?"

Would I like toâ€|â€|? I repeated, thinking over what he had said.

Oh yeah!

— —

Yeah right! I said.

"Haâ€| "

Why do you keep asking me anyway!? I asked.

"You'd make a welcome addition to Team Rocket. No one else has ever been able to successfully steal any of my PokÃ©mon, let alone every single one. Not only that, but you're a well-known PokÃ©mon Masterâ€|You have power and skillâ€|andâ€|you just happen to be an extremely rare PokÃ©monâ€|Wouldn't you say those are some good reasons?"

Uhâ€|

He had overwhelmed me with so many compliments, that I wasn't sure how to react.

"So, what do you say? Come back?"

Uhâ€|No! Never! We're getting Dr. Gray, and then we're leaving! Right guys!?

"Chhar!"

"Perrssiiian!"

"Pika!"

As you wishâ€| Taper smiled at me.

"Hmâ€|That's what you want to believeâ€|Jessie, James, get them!"

"Uhâ€|I wouldâ€|" Jessie began, "but you seeâ€|uhâ€|both of my PokÃ©mon were knocked out by that Charizardâ€|"

"Charizard?"

He smirked at Charizard.

"Wellâ€| It's looks like you're getting along nicely with your newâ€|oldâ€|trainerâ€|"

"Zard!?"

_ 'What!?' _

--

"Well, aren't you?" he asked quizzically.

"Irrrrâ€|"

Just say yes, Charizard! I hissed.

"â€|â€|â€|â€|â€|Char."

_ 'â€|â€|â€|â€|â€|No.' _

--

Charizard!

"Persianâ€|"

_ 'Uh ohâ€|' _

--

"You ready to come back?" Giovanni asked.

I turned so I was facing Charizard.

What are you doing, Charizard!?

"Charâ€|izâ€|â€|.zarddâ€|"

_ 'â€|I shouldn't have come hereâ€|' _

--

Yeah? Well I shouldn't have either! But I did, and so did you, and we can't change that!

Charizard looked down at meâ€|I could feelâ€|â€|it had mixed feelingsâ€|It wasn't sure what to doâ€|â€|

Why don't you knowâ€|?

"Weezing! Victreebel!"

I spun around just in time to see Weezing and Victreebel emerge from their PokÃ©balls.

"You too, Meowth," Giovanni said.

"Meeowth?" Meowth asked in surprise.

Giovanni didn't even have to say anything. Meowth got ready to fight.

"Meowth! Look out!" Jessie cried.

Meowth glanced up to see Victreebel bearing down on it. It screeched and scrambled out of the way.

"Attack _them_!" James shouted, turning Victreebel so it was facing us.

A battleâ€|?

"Zard!"

_ 'Ready! '_

— —

"Pikaâ€|!"

_ 'Ready! '_

— —

Persian crept back so it was standing next to me.

"Persianâ€|persianperâ€|"

_ 'Ash, we have to be careful. This is only one battle. We have to be ready to win the warâ€|'_

— —

â€|Huh?

"Persian! Persiaanâ€|"

_ 'If we get too tired out by this one battle, we won't have enough energy to fight off all the Rockets that are going to come our wayâ€|'_

— —

"Weezing! Smokescreen!"

"Weezing!"

Weezing released a cloud of smoke that irritated our vision and our breathing.

Pikachu! Thunderbolt! I said.

"Pika _CHU!!!_" Pikachu shouted.

Pikachu's lightning ended up zapping just about everyone in the room, including me.

Watch where you're aiming Pikachu! I said.

"Chu!"

_ 'Sorry!' _

— —

"Razor Leaf!"

Through the smoke, I saw about four or five spinning leaves heading straight for Persian.

"Mew!" I cried.

_ 'Watch out!' _

— —

"Sian!"

Persian jumped over the first two, then ducked the third and swiped away the last one.

"Persiannâ€|" it snarled.

_ 'I don't give in that easilyâ€|' _

— —

"Tackle attack!"

I knew Weezing was going to hit me before it hit me, but I still didn't have enough time to do anything about it. I felt it slam into my side, and we both flew backwards and I ended up getting knocked into Charizard's stomach.

"Mew!"

_ 'Ow!' _

— —

"Sludge attack!"

"Mew?"

The awful, smelly, poisonous sludge glopped over me, and I was suddenly struck with dÃ©jÃ vuâ€| I ignored that and crawled to safety.

Charizardâ€|use Flamethrowerâ€| I pleaded.

"Zard?"

_ 'Flamethrower?' _

— —

Yes, Flamethrowerâ€|Now!

"â€|Charizardâ€|"

_ 'â€|I don't think soâ€|'_

--

What!?

Charizard rammed its head against Weezing, and it flew through the smoke.

I wish Pidgeotto was here to get rid of the smokeâ€|â€|but Charizard has wings tooâ€|

--

Charizard! See if you can't do anything about the smoke!

"TRRREEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEE!!!!" I heard Victreebel screech.

Charizard moved forward and let the vines smack it hard. Its tail swished back and forth angrily, and I had to move out of the way so I didn't get burnt. Charizard hit Victreebel with an Ember attack.

"EEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEE!!!!!!" it screamed in pain and anger.

"Acid!" James ordered.

Victreebel spat out an onslaught of stinging Acid that hit Charizard in the face. Charizard roared, and as I watched, the flame on its tail grew larger and largerâ€|

It's gonna use Rageâ€|

--

Persian attacked Victreebel with its Fury Swipes, and Pikachu continued to zap Weezingâ€|but I knew that Charizard was going to end this battle quicklyâ€|and not necessarily for the betterâ€|

Charizard breathed out a huge Fire Blast that demolished everything in its path. Giovanni ranâ€|

I remembered what had happened when I had met Jessie and James for the first timeâ€|James had had Koffing use Smokescreenâ€|but Pikachu and I had made sure that we won, because Pikachu used a super-powerful Thundershock that had made the entire building explodeâ€|â€|I didn't want to think about what a Fire Blast could doâ€|â€|

Taper! Teleport!! I called out.

What!?

NOW! I shrieked.

I tried to help get everyone out of there, but we were too lateâ€|

"Weezing! Don't do it!" I heard James cry.

The next thing I heard was the sound of a bombâ€|It was right next to me. It was surrounding meâ€|and all of usâ€|Then the heat cameâ€|and the fireâ€|â€|

2. Burnt

> <meta name="ProgId"> Chapter 2

Chapter 2

"Burnt"

"Squirtle! Squirtle, squirtle!"

_ 'Ash! Ash, wake up! '_

— —

"Pikachuâ€| "

_ 'Wake up, Ashâ€| '_

— —

I tried to open my eyes, but just the tiniest bit of motion created such a terrible painâ€|I whimpered softlyâ€|

"Pikapi?"

_ 'Are you okay? '_

— —

â€|It hurtsâ€|

"Pika?"

_ 'Ash? '_

— —

I felt something cool flow over my back and down my sidesâ€|I relished that feeling, although it only felt good for a short whileâ€|

"â€|Bulbasaur?"

_ 'â€|Is he gonna be okay? '_

— —

"Pikachuâ€| "

_ 'I hope soâ€| '_

— —

"Squirtle? Squirtsquirt?"

_ 'Ash? Are you awake?' _

— —

I think soâ€|

"Baâ€| "

_ 'Whatâ€| ?' _

— —

"Pikachu?"

_ 'Can you move?' _

— —

â€|â€|No.

"Ka!?"

_ 'What!?' _

— —

If I try toâ€|it hurtsâ€|â€|

"Pikachuâ€|â€| "

— —

â€|Better not move then.

I tried once more to open my eyes. I tried to ignore the pain as my vision gradually became clearerâ€|

"Pikapi!?"

_ 'Ash!?' _

— —

I could see Pikachu, Taper, and Bulbasaur directly in front of me. Behind them were Persian, Pidgeotto, and Sandslashâ€|I couldn't see anything else very clearlyâ€|Just keeping my eyes open was tiringâ€|

Where are we? I asked.

"Bulbasaur," Bulbasaur replied.

_ 'In the woods.' _

--
"Drrowzee, drowwâ€|" Taper added.

_ 'I made sure we went someplace where no humans could find us.' _

--
I turned my head. I could feel my skin crack from the movement, but I wanted to see everything elseâ€|

To my right, Charizard was lying on the ground. The flame on its tail was still burning, but it was slightly smaller than usualâ€| It had its head hidden behind its wing. Kingler and Muk were looking after it.

I dropped my head onto the ground. I had gotten tired of holding it upâ€| I closed my eyes.

What happenedâ€| ?

"Squirtle, squirtleâ€|â€| "

_ 'The whole place blew upâ€|â€| ' _

--
That was what I was expecting to hearâ€|

How'd we get out here?

"Pikachuâ€|" Pikachu said, "Pikapikaaaâ€|

_ 'You teleported most of us out of thereâ€|â€| but you weren't fast enough to get out before it blew upâ€| ' _

--
Was it just me?

"Pikachuâ€|Pikapikachuâ€|Kachuâ€| "

_ 'Noâ€| You were just hurt very badlyâ€|Charizard tooâ€| ' _

--
Persian wasn't doing so good either, Taper said.

â€|Pikachu? How did youâ€| ?

"Kachuuuâ€| "

_ 'Just got lucky, I guessâ€| ' _

--
"Squirtsquirtâ€|Squirtletle?"

_ 'We didn't wanna try a PokÃ©mon Center before you woke upâ€| What

about now? '_

— —

PokÃ©mon Center?!

I tried to get myself into a sitting position, but I only ended up hurting myself even more.

â€|I'm not going to a PokÃ©mon Centerâ€| I said.

"Bulbasaur! Bulbabulbasaurâ€| "

_ 'But you should, Ash! That isn't a normal woundâ€| '_

— —

What do you mean?

"Bulâ€|â€|Bulbasaur, bulbabulbasaurâ€|â€| "

_ 'Wellâ€|â€|Normally, it's very hard for a PokÃ©mon to become poisoned and burnt at the same timeâ€|â€| '_

— —

Whatâ€|?

"Pikachuâ€| "

_ 'You should go, Ashâ€| '_

— —

"Squirtle, squirt."

_ 'Charizard too.' _

— —

â€|We're going to Pallet.

"Pik!?"

"Squirtle?"

What are you doing, Ash!?

I never wanted to save Dr. Gray in the first placeâ€|â€|I just want to go homeâ€|â€|

"Pikapiiâ€| "

_ 'But Ashâ€| '_

— —

So can we?

â€|â€|I guess we canâ€|â€|

I felt the now-familiar Teleportation aura surround me, and that time, I didn't have to do any of the work.

* * *

Not too surprisingly, Brock, Misty, Billie, and Richie were staying at my houseâ€|As soon as Mom saw me, she rushed me off to get washed up, treated, and properly rested. No one else had any idea how relieved I was to have someone start bossing me around againâ€|I had started to miss it while I was staying with Mewtwoâ€|While she was doing that, she also told Charizard to go to Professor Oak's right away so it could get a proper treatment. I think Brock helped out the rest of the PokÃ©mon.

â€|It felt good to be in my own bed, even if it was a little bigger than I remembered itâ€|â€|

"Ash, how could you let this happen?" Mom asked, as she continued to rub my skin to help it heal faster.

I didn't do it on purpose, I reminded her.

"I know thatâ€|â€|but you really should be more carefulâ€|â€|If it had been any worse, I don't think you would be here right nowâ€|â€|"

â€|â€|I've been through worse, Momâ€|

"But how much more can you take, Ash? Think about that before you get yourself into these dangerous situationsâ€|â€|I don't want to lose youâ€|"

â€|You won'tâ€|â€|I promiseâ€| I told her.

I was serious about the last partâ€|â€|Mewtwo had told me about the average lifespan of a Mewâ€|â€|It said Mews could live for centuriesâ€|â€|and then someâ€|â€|It was kind of scary, reallyâ€|

There was a gentle tapping at the door, and an orange-haired head peeked in.

"â€|Mrs. Ketchum?" she asked timidly.

"Yes?" Mom asked.

Misty let herself in the room. Behind her were Billie, Richie, and Pikachu. Their eyes widened when they saw me.

"Ash! Are you okay?" Richie asked.

Yeahâ€| I said.

I don't think they believed meâ€|â€|

"Taper told us what happenedâ€|â€|" Misty said.

"Pikapi!?"

_ 'Ash! '_

--
Pikachu jumped onto my bed and looked at me.

"Pikapi, kachu?" it asked.

_ 'Are you sure you're okay?' _

--
Yeahâ€| I 'm fine, I said.

"Chuâ€| "

_ 'If you say soâ€| ' _

--
"Ashâ€| have youâ€| seen yourself yet?" Richie asked.

Noâ€| I said.

"That explains it," Billie concluded.

Huh? Why? Explains what?

"Well, Ashâ€| You don't look good at all," Misty told me.

"All right. That's enough now," Mom said, "Time for you to go. Ash needs his rest. Byeâ€| "

They reluctantly turned and left.

What was that for? I asked.

"You don't need them telling you how bad you lookâ€|â€| It's not good for your health."

â€|â€| Let me seeâ€| I said quietly.

"Ashâ€|â€| "

Let me see!

"Pikaâ€| "

_ 'Ashâ€| ' _

--
I knew she didn't want to, but she picked me up and brought me to the mirror in my room so I could get a good look at myself.

I immediately understood why she hadn't wanted to show meâ€|â€| I didn't look at all like myselfâ€|â€| What hadn't blackened by fire was brown or red or pinkâ€| It wasn't the normal Mew pink either. It was the pink that you see when you open up a scab that had been on the

brink of healing before it was interrupted. Most of the non-black portions were red though, where irritated burns had started to bleedâ€|The only part of me that was its normal color were my eyesâ€|

"You see?" Mom asked, "That's why I didn't want them talking to you like thatâ€|"

"â€|Mewâ€| "

"Come on now. You're going to get some sleep now. This will take time to heal, and it's not going to do any good to have you wandering around out of bed."

"â€|â€|â€|mewâ€| "

_ 'â€|â€|â€|okayâ€| ' _

— —

Mom put me back in bed.

"Get some sleep, okay?" she said.

"Mewâ€| "

_ 'Yes, Momâ€| ' _

— —

"Goodâ€|I'll see you later, okay?"

"Mewâ€| "

_ 'Okayâ€| ' _

— —

She left my room and closed the door behind her.

"â€|Pikachu?"

_ 'â€|Ash? ' _

— —

â€|â€|â€|â€|Yeah?

"Pikachu, kaâ€| "

_ 'Get better soon, okay? ' _

— —

â€|Sure willâ€|

> <meta name="ProgId"> Chapter 3

Chapter 3

"Ketchup And Mayonnaise"

_ 'Ashuraâ€| '|_

--

_ 'Huh? '|_

--

_ 'Ashuraâ€| '|_

--

_ 'Who's there? '|_

--

_ 'Where are you, Ashura? '|_

--

_ 'Uhâ€|Who are you? '|_

--

_ 'Where are you? '|_

--

_ 'â€|I asked first! '|_

--

_ 'â€|â€|You truly believe you are a humanâ€|? '|_

--

_ 'I am. '|_

--

_ 'â€|Poor Ashuraâ€|â€| '|_

--

_ 'What are you talking about!? Who are you, anyway!?'|_

--

_ 'â€|Poor, poor Ashuraâ€|â€| '|_

--

_ 'Stop calling me that! '|_

--
_ 'Dear Ashuraâ€|Do not yellâ€|â€|'_

--
_ 'I can yell if I want to!! Who are you!!?'_

--
_ 'â€|I will speak to you againâ€|Goodbye, Ashuraâ€|'_

--
_ 'Wait a second! You didn't even tell me who you are!!'_

--
â€| â€|

--
* * *

It took a while to recover enough to satisfy Mom. She wouldn't let me leave the bed until she was completely sure that I was okay. I guess that's what mothers are for, huh?

â€|I didn't tell anyone about that strange dream. I felt it was best if they didn't know.

I worked on Transforming into myself. I had a feeling that I wouldn't be able to challenge the Elite if they knew that I was PokÃ©monâ€|I could never completely get rid of the pain, and it was very exhaustingâ€|but that was another thing I hidâ€|I wanted them to keep their faith in meâ€|They wouldn't trust me to battle the Elite Four if I could barely keep myself as meâ€|

I trained my PokÃ©mon too. I knew I would only be able to bring six with me, but I trained all of themâ€|Even Charizard let me train itâ€|

The others had told me what had happened to it in the explosion. The combination of the Acid on its face and the fire that it had created had burned away a lot of its skin. They said the same thing had happened to me, only I had been covered entirely in sludge, not just my faceâ€|I think we both looked a lot better after we had been given time to recover.

Because I didn't want too many people knowing about my true form, whenever I left the house, I made myself Transform. I did all of the training outside, so I could get more used to Transforming for a long timeâ€|As time passed, I began to pray that the battles against the Elite would last less than twenty minutesâ€|

* * *

"Asha!!"

_ Ashaâ€|?_

--
I only knew one person in the world who called me Ashaâ€|

I looked up. A young, brown-haired girl was leaning over the fence, grinning at me.

"Mayo!" I said in greeting.

"Pika?"

_ 'Mayo?' _

--

"Yeah."

Mayo laughed and climbed over.

"Well, Asha, it looks like you've got yourself a lotta PokÃ©mon!" she said.

"That's for sureâ€|"

She looked around at all of them.

"â€|And you became a PokÃ©mon Masterâ€|"

"Uh-huhâ€|"

"â€|Soâ€|â€|did you have fun?"

"Sure did."

"â€|â€|â€|That's goodâ€|"

"â€|Something wrong, Mayo?"

"â€|â€|Asha, do have any idea how boring it was without you and Gary around!?"

"Well, uhâ€|"

"There wasn't anyone around to bother! And you weren't there to keep me companyâ€|!"

"Mayoâ€|"

"_And_ _"

"Mayoâ€|â€|"

"-when you did come back, you didn't even come over to say hi!! What kind of friend's that!?"

"Mayo, I-"

"Asha! Why didn't you tell me you were here!!? I had to find out from

Grandpa, of all people!"

"Eh hehâ€|"

"â€|Wellâ€|Anyway, I'm glad you're back."

"Yeah, me too."

That's when I started to worry about something completely different.

I'm gonna have to change back soonâ€|â€|What's Mayo gonna say when she finds outâ€|?

— —

â€|Does she have to find outâ€|?

"Uhâ€|Mayoâ€|I'm kinda in the middle of something right nowâ€|â€|Do you think maybe you could come by laterâ€|?"

"What!? You're too busy for me!?"

"Well, uhâ€|Notâ€|umâ€|â€|Well, I'm just about done training for the day, and after I'm done, Iâ€|â€|usually like to take a rest before I do anything else."

There. That's not too far from the truthâ€|â€|

— —

"â€|Ohâ€|â€|I seeâ€|â€|I get it. You don't need to hide it from me, Asha. I understandâ€|"

"Huh? Hide what?" I asked honestly.

There's no way she could know aboutâ€|â€|Right?

— —

"Quit it, Asha. I know what's going on."

"â€|You do??"

"Oh yeahâ€|You left Pallet, off to become a PokÃ©mon Masterâ€|â€|You left all by yourselfâ€|You come back after a year, and guess what? You _are_ a PokÃ©mon Masterâ€|A big shotâ€|I'm just not worth your time anymoreâ€|â€|I guess I'll go home nowâ€|â€|"

She hung her head and started shuffling back to the fence.

"Wait a sec, Mayo!!" I cried.

She stopped and looked at me expectantly.

"Ummâ€|â€|You have got it _all_ wrongâ€|Iâ€|â€|â€|"

"Uh-huhâ€|?"

"Ummmmâ€|â€|â€|There 'sâ€|uhâ€|â€|â€|Ummmmmmmmâ€|â€| "

"What is it, Asha?"

"Uhmâ€|Do you think you could come back laterâ€|? I have to think about exactly how I want to tell you thisâ€|â€|uhâ€|â€|â€|I don't want toâ€|â€|shock youâ€|"

She raised an eyebrow.

"Why don't you tell me now, so I don't have to try to figure it out in the meantime?"

â€|That's probably a good ideaâ€|â€|

--

â€|Wait a second, I can't tell herâ€|Sheâ€|â€|

--

_â€|â€|She's my friend. I can trust herâ€|â€|I _know_ I can!_

"Mayoâ€|Come with meâ€|" I said quietly.

She nodded and followed me into the house.

Before I let us in, I had to make sure that no one was around. I didn't want anyone else to know what I was about to do until they had to.

"Pikapi!?"

_ 'What are you doing!?'_

--

"Pikachuâ€|â€|Everyoneâ€|You stay here and keep on training, okay? I'll be right back."

"Pikaâ€|chuâ€|"

_ 'Okayâ€|I guessâ€| ' _

--

It might not have been a good idea to leave all of them out there by themselves, but Team Rocket had other troubles at the moment, and I was certain that my PokÃ©mon could take care of themselves.

â€|We ended up in the "study", the least used room in the entire houseâ€|It was full of booksâ€|Most of them were about gardening and PokÃ©mon. Dad hadâ€|â€|

* * *

â€|â€|Before he leftâ€|he had left a lot of PokÃ©mon stuff here so that I would be well educated before I began PokÃ©mon trainingâ€|â€|A lot of good that did meâ€|â€|

â€|No, the real reason it didn't do me any good was because I was too lazy to read through them allâ€|â€|

â€|There were a lot of potted plants in the studyâ€|Mom liked to keep the place "lively" by putting a lot of living things thereâ€|â€|I never fully understood her logic, but then again, I never really needed tooâ€|

â€|â€|Of course, I couldn't get away with living in that house without helping her take care of the plantsâ€|â€|She said she'd always liked plantsâ€|the same way that I had always liked PokÃ©monâ€|I guess we kind of rubbed off on each other, because now she has Mimeyâ€|â€|and Bulbasaur's one of my strongest PokÃ©monâ€|

â€|â€|I had never imagined that I would actually become a PokÃ©mon. Sure, I had wondered what it might be like, but I wanted to stay human so I could train themâ€|â€|Now, I couldn't help but wonder if my dream was over alreadyâ€|

* * *

"â€|Asha? You okay?"

"Uhhâ€|Yeahâ€|I'm okayâ€|â€|"

I tried to ignore the nostalgia in that roomâ€|â€|â€|Before I had actually met himâ€|â€|my dad had been my heroâ€|â€|â€|

"You sure you're okay?"

"Yeah. I'm sureâ€|â€|â€|" I took a deep breath,
"â€|â€|Okayâ€|â€|Umâ€|Mayo? I have to tellâ€|erâ€|â€|â€|"

"Yeah, I know. That's what you said."

"No. I meanâ€|â€|â€|I can't just tell you. I have to show you, otherwise, you won't believe me."

"Asha! Why wouldn't I believe you?" she asked indignantly.

"Quiet!" I hissed, "Nowâ€|â€|uhâ€|wellâ€|â€|This is differentâ€|â€|Okayâ€|â€|umâ€|have you ever heard of a Mew?"

"A Mew?"

"Yeah. Well, have you?"

"Ummmmâ€|â€|Iâ€|â€|don't think soâ€|â€|â€|â€|â€|Wait! Yes I have! I read about it in one of Grandpa's books! It wasâ€|a fairy tale I thinkâ€|â€|umâ€|Something like 'The Legend Of Mew', or something like thatâ€|â€|It was an interesting storyâ€|â€|Too bad it's not real."

The Legend Of Mewâ€|?

--

(A/N: No, this is not an ad for "The Legend Of Mew". I am assuming

that you have already read it, if you're reading this fic!
^_~)

"What was it about?" I asked.

"Oh umâ€|â€|It said something aboutâ€|â€|uhâ€|It's hard to remember. It's been a while, butâ€|â€|I think it said something about humans and Mews used to be the same, or something like thatâ€|? It was kinda weirdâ€|"

She continued on about some other PokÃ©mon, but only one part stuck in my mind.

_Humans and Mewsâ€|â€|the _same_!!?_

--

I realized that Mayo had unwittingly hit on something bigâ€|

"Mayoâ€|" I said in a hushed tone, "that was no fairy taleâ€|â€|"

"Huh!?"

I'll prove it to youâ€|

"Whatâ€|!? _Asha_!!!?"

I transformed right in front of her. I couldn't put it off any longer, anywayâ€|I would start to get dizzyâ€|â€|When I was done, I looked up to see her staring wide-eyed at me. She knelt down, keeping the same expression on her face.

"Ashaâ€|?" she asked in wonder, "Is that really youâ€|?"

Yeahâ€|This is me, Mayoâ€|

"Howâ€|!?"

â€|It's a really long storyâ€|â€|Maybe I'll tell it to you sometimeâ€|â€|but right now, you have to promise not to tell anybody_! Not your friends, not your familyâ€|â€|No one. Got it?

"Sure, Ashaâ€|â€|" She grinned, "They'd probably just think I'm crazy, anyway!"

I laughed. Probablyâ€|Who knows? Maybe we _are_ crazy!

"Well, _you_ may be, but until just a moment ago, I was perfectly sane!"

That's what you _think_!!

We both started laughing. After a whole year apart, we were still friendsâ€|â€|That was a nice feelingâ€|

* * *

Sooner or later, Mom came in the room to see what was making all that "weird noise". She sure was surprised to see us! I ended up having to tell Mayo who already knew about my new shape.

"Asha, you want to go over to Grandpa's lab tomorrow and see if I can find that book again?"

Sure. That'd be good.

"Okay! I guess I'll see you tomorrow! Bye Asha! Luv ya!"

I laughed nervously. You too!

I hope no one else heard that!

--

Mom smiled and left the room, leaving me alone or so I thought!

--

"Ash!!?"

Too late.

I turned around slowly.

Hi! Misty!

"Ash, who was that!!?"

Um! That was Mayo! I mean uh! May! Oak!

"May!_Oak_!?" she asked incredulously.

Uh-huh! I nodded.

"As in related to Gary!?"

Uh-huh!â€

"â€!â€! What was that last part about!?"

Um!â€!â€! the love part?

"Yeah! That!"

Ummmm!â€!â€!â€! She's my friend, Misty!â€! I've known her for a long time!â€!â€!"

"â€!How long?"

Uhhh!â€! Since I was in kindergarten, I guessâ€!

"â€!â€! You know each other really well?"

Uh-huh!

"â€|â€|â€|â€|How well?"

â€|Why does she keep asking all these weird questionsâ€|â€|?

--

â€|â€|â€|â€|â€|â€|â€|â€|â€|â€|â€|umâ€|

--

â€|â€|â€|Misty?

"What?"

â€|â€|â€|â€|Sheâ€|â€|â€|â€|She was my only real friend before I met Pikachuâ€|â€|â€|We're like brother and sisterâ€|â€|â€|

"Who's the brother and who's the sister?" Misty asked sarcastically.

I didn't worry about that comment. She wasn't in a good moodâ€|â€|andâ€|â€|â€|I was afraid that I knew whyâ€|â€|â€|â€|

I have to go bring my PokÃ©mon back insideâ€|

"Yeah. You go do that."

Okayâ€|â€|

I hope she's not mad at meâ€|

(A/N: Okay, I have no idea how old May is "supposed" to be, because she was never in the anime, and I've never looked at the comics, so don't get all upset if I'm wrong. The Asha/Mayo relationship will be explained more in the next chapter. Tat's all! *^_^*)

4. A Fairy Tale